



**January 2025**

3033 St. Croix Trail South  
P.O. Box 219  
Afton, MN 55001

**City of Afton Dashboard**  
**A Summary of Current Happenings**

- ◆ The council adopted the 2025 annual budget and tax levy, with a tax levy increase of 1.94%.
- ◆ An ordinance amendment to limit short-term home rentals (less than 30 days) in the city was approved. This amendment allows short-term rentals only as accessory uses in commercial buildings in the Old Village commercial zone. Short-term home rentals outside this zone are not permitted.
- ◆ An ordinance to regulate Cannabis businesses, which limits cannabis retail sales to one establishment in the Old Village commercial zone, was approved. State law requires Afton to allow at least one cannabis retail establishment within the city.
- ◆ Farm stands in Afton are a big hit. The city encourages farm stand owners to call the city to have their stands listed on the city’s web site.
- ◆ The City Engineer reported on next year’s resurfacing project of nearly seven (7) miles of our older roads using a “micro-surfacing” technique. This process is significantly less expensive than a typical mill and overlay project. The city plans to continue micro-surfacing roads that were paved in the 2004 era.
- ◆ As part of the city’s long term road maintenance plan established in 2016, engineering preparations are underway for the reclamation of Valley Creek Trail. Specific dates have not been established but will either be in 2025 or 2026 based on cost. The city plans to meet with residents of Valley Creek Trail prior to final plan completion.
- ◆ An increase in the Old Village’s sanitary sewer fee was approved. The increase from the current \$55 per month to \$60 per month will start in 2025. This fee adjustment is needed to cover annual operation and maintenance costs and to provide a reserve for anticipated equipment repairs and replacements.

SAR



**CITY OFFICE CLOSED**

**Wednesday, January 1**

*In observance of New Years Day*

**Monday, January 20**

*In observance of Martin Luther King Jr Day*

**CITY MEETINGS**

**January 8, 2025**

Heritage Preservation Commission  
6:00 PM

**January 13, 2025**

Parks Committee  
6:00 PM

**January 14, 2025**

Natural Resources & Groundwater  
Committee  
5:00 PM

**January 21, 2025**

City Council Meeting  
7:00 PM

Public Participation Via Zoom Will Continue to be Available for City Council and Planning Commission Meetings.

Information on how to join the meetings will be posted on the City website along with the agenda and meeting packet.

**CITY COUNCIL**

Mayor: Bill Palmquist 651-308-0569

Ward 1: Annie Perkins 651-592-3007

Ward 2: Lucia Wroblewski 651-436-3982

Ward 3: Stan Ross 612-720-6478

Ward 4: Randy Nelson 651-436-2479

**CITY HALL**

651-436-5090

**CITY WEBSITE**

**[www.ci.afton.mn.us](http://www.ci.afton.mn.us)**

**IMPORTANT NUMBERS**

Animal Control 715-220-1332

Building Inspector 651-436-6469

Burning Permits 651-248-5103

Environmental Center 651-275-7475

Highland Sanitation 651-458-0043

Otter Lake Animal Care 651-426-8871

Fire Dept 651-436-7033

Sheriff's Dept 651-439-9381

**EMERGENCY 911**

## Notes from the Mayor

In late December, the city finalized the purchase of 40 acres of land along the St. Croix River bluff between the Old Village and Afton State Park. This is an incredible achievement and another step to protect the beauty and natural environment of the Lower St. Croix National Scenic Riverway. This purchase was the result of our staff working in partnership with several other agencies. I would like to thank Washington County, the Minnesota Land Trust, and the State of Minnesota Department of Natural Resources for providing the resources and expertise needed to make this opportunity a reality. And a special thank you to the property owner Susan Herreid for her patience, and willingness to find a way to make this happen. Susan wanted to continue to protect this beautiful property she had stewarded for decades and worked with us and those other partners to make that happen. The majority of the funding was provided by our partners and the initial city share was funded by the park dedication fund, a restricted fund for park and open space uses that comes from land development fees. The city will work over the next few years in conjunction with the Land Trust on a plan for a trail to provide public access. More on that when the Park Committee begins to work on the plan.

Our longtime Post Master Mike Wotrang is retiring. Mike has worked over the years to create an atmosphere in our local post office that draws people from outside our city, often driving past other post offices to visit ours. We are grateful to Mike and his staff for their dedicated work over the years to keep our local post office viable, friendly, helpful, and welcoming. All the best to you Mike! You will be missed.

-Bill

### Winter Clothing Swap

**Location: Washington County Historic Courthouse**

101 Pine Street W., Stillwater, MN 55082

**Swap date and time: Saturday, January 25, 2025**

**11 a.m. - 2 p.m.**

Stop by to shop for free, gently used winter apparel and accessories. Donations are not required to participate. Unclaimed clothing will be donated. Limit one coat per person.

**Accepting donations Monday, December 30 - January 20**

Drop off your clean, gently used winter clothing at the following locations: Lake Elmo Park Reserve, Cottage Grove Ravine Regional Park, or the Historic Courthouse.

Items accepted should be free of major stains and tears. Items should be winter-based such as hats, gloves, snow pants, coats, snow boots, and base layers.

#### Contact information

For questions, contact Washington County Parks at 651-430-4333



### Food Scraps PICKUP Program™

Afton Residents are able to participate in Ramsey and Washington counties' Food Scraps Pickup Program—a new way to recycle food scraps from your home!

Did you know that food scraps make up about 20% of trash collected in the two counties? By recycling your food scraps, you can help turn this material into soil, rather than becoming waste

#### Here's how it works:

- ⇒ **Order your free annual supply of food scrap bags.**
- ⇒ **Collect your food scraps in the food scrap bags. Once a week or when the food scrap bag is full, tie a knot at the top to close the bag.**
- ⇒ **Place your food scrap bag inside your trash cart or dumpster for collection.**
- ⇒ **Done! Your trash is collected as usual, and the food scrap bags are sorted from the trash and composted.**

To learn more:

**FoodScrapsPickup.com** and 24/7 customer service line at **651-661-9393**

## Meeting Highlights

### December 2, 2024 Planning Commission Meeting

#### The Commission:

- Held a public hearing for a variance application to add a garage next to the house at 2451 Stagecoach Tr S.
- Held a public hearing for an amendment to the Short Term Home Rental Ordinance.
- Held a public hearing for an Ordinance to establish regulations for Cannabis and Hemp businesses.

### December 17, 2024 City Council Meeting

#### The Council:

- Approved the 2025 Budget and Tax Levy.
- Approved a variance application to add a garage next to the house at 2451 Stagecoach Tr S.
- Approved an Ordinance to Regulate Cannabis & Hemp Businesses— Ordinance 13-2024.
- Approved an Ordinance Amendment relating to Short Term Home Rentals— Ordinance 14-2024.

MEETING PACKETS, VIDEOS AND APPROVED MEETING MINUTES ARE AVAILABLE AT:  
[www.ci.afton.mn.us](http://www.ci.afton.mn.us)

## Belwin Conservancy Upcoming Events

### Midwinter Family Fun

**Saturday, February 1**

5:00 pm - 7:00 pm

Belwin Education Site

Cost: Free

On Saturday, February 1st, from 5:00 pm to 7:00 pm, Belwin Conservancy will host Midwinter Family Fun. This night of free outdoor activities features hikes through the snow guided by Belwin naturalists, stargazing with Minnesota Astronomical Society, and s'mores around several campfires. The event is free and will take place at the Hilltop Classroom at the Education Site (1553 Stagecoach Trail South, Afton, MN, 55001).

### Winter Wandering

**Sunday, February 2**

10:00 am - 12:00 pm

Belwin Education Site

Presented in partnership with Saint Paul Public Schools Community Education.

Join us for a morning of exploring the world of winter! We will look for signs of life and figure out how animals survive the cold. Dress in layers and come prepared to spend most of the time outside on the trail.

For details and registration contact:

**Belwin Conservancy**  
**1553 Stagecoach Trail South**  
**Afton MN 55001**  
**651-436-5189**

[www.belwin.org](http://www.belwin.org)

## Planning Commission Opening

The City is seeking an Afton resident from Ward 3 to serve on the Planning Commission. The Planning Commission is responsible for reviewing requests for rezoning, platting, subdivisions, conditional use permits and variances. The Commission is also involved in reviewing and updating the City's land use ordinances and in the periodic updating of the City's Comprehensive Plan, which is the City's long term plan for managing land use and development with the overall goal of protecting and preserving Afton's natural, rural character.

Planning Commission Meetings are held the First Monday of Every Month at 7 p.m. at City Hall.

The following is a link to the Ward Boundary Map.

[https://www.ci.afton.mn.us/vertical/sites/%7B255148F5-88B9-45F6-9726-DD95D24AA1D%7D/uploads/2022\\_Afton\\_Wards\\_Map.pdf](https://www.ci.afton.mn.us/vertical/sites/%7B255148F5-88B9-45F6-9726-DD95D24AA1D%7D/uploads/2022_Afton_Wards_Map.pdf)

Stan Ross is the Council member for Ward 3.

**Application forms are available on the city website or at City Hall.**

## Be a Battery Hero

Batteries can be hazardous if disposed of improperly. Anything that makes sounds, lights up or turns on without being plugged in contains a battery. In addition to electronics and toys, batteries can be found in light-up ornaments, musical greeting cards and flameless candles.

Be a battery hero and bring all types of used batteries to the **Washington County Environmental Center** for free recycling.

4039 Cottage Grove Drive  
 Woodbury, MN 55129  
 651-275-7475





CITY OF AFTON  
3033 ST CROIX TRAIL SO  
P.O. BOX 219  
AFTON, MN 55001

PRSRT STD  
U.S. POSTAGE PAID  
AFTON MN 55001  
PERMIT NO. 15

## **Valley Library Events & Important Dates**

Library Closures:

**January 1<sup>st</sup>** for New Year's Day

**January 20<sup>th</sup>** in observance of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day

**Did you know** that Washington County Library celebrates adult readers in January and February with our Winter Reads program? Submit a written review in person to the library or online to win an instant prize. Submit multiple reviews to increase your chances of winning a grand prize. For more information search "Winter Reads" at washcolib.org.

### **For Adults:**

The Valley Library Book Club meets **5:00-6:00pm** on the 4<sup>th</sup> Thursday of every month. The title selection for the **Thursday January 23<sup>rd</sup>** meeting is "*The Personal Librarian*" by Marie Benedict

### **For Teens:**

Running through May 2025, Washington County Library is presenting a Life Skills for Young Adults series at the RH Stafford Library in Woodbury. Presented by UMN 4-H Extension - Life Skills: Introduction to Finances will be presented on **Thursday January 16 5:30-7:00pm** where youth, ages 14-18, will learn about making your first budgets, understanding credit, and how to build credit. Registration is required

### **For Kids:**

**Every Monday 10:30-11:00 am** Storytime

**Monday, January 13 10:30-11:00** Music and Movement Storytime

**Thursday, January 9<sup>th</sup> 6:00 pm** Pajama Storytime

**Saturday, January 11<sup>th</sup> 11:00-1:00** Kid Builders

**Thursday, January 30<sup>th</sup> 3:45-4:45 pm** Dog Man Movie Release Party

For complete information and to register for programs contact:

**Valley Library 651-436-5882**  
**www.washcolib.org**

**PATRON**  
**AFTON, MN 55001**

**Online payments** are now available for city permits & fees including Building Permits and Sewer Payments,  
[www.ci.afton.mn.us](http://www.ci.afton.mn.us)



*Please recycle this newsletter after use.*

## **REDUCE HOLIDAY WASTE**

Americans generate 23% more waste in December than any other month of the year. That's 36 extra pounds of waste per person! Reduce the amount of holiday waste going into the trash by knowing where to throw it.

### **Reuse it**

- Gift boxes & bags
- Tissue paper
- Bows & ribbons

### **Recycle it**

- Cardboard boxes (flatten)
- Paper cards & envelopes
- Bottles & cans
- Catalogs & magazines
- Popcorn & cookie tins

### **Bring it to the Environmental Center**

- Holiday lights & cords
- Plastic bags, bubble wrap, & plastic air pillows
- Electronics & batteries

### **Trash it**

- Tissue paper
- Wrapping paper with glitter or foil
- Styrofoam
- Bows & ribbons

**Washington County Environmental Center (651) 275-7475**